

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Official Action, the Examiner raised certain rejections, but indicated on page 7 of the Action that claims 17 and 18 were only objected to and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.¹

By the present Amendment, the subject matter of claim 17 has been incorporated into claim 1 from which it formerly depended and similarly the subject matter of claim 18 has been incorporated into claim 9 from which it formerly dependent with both claims 17 and 18 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, since the claims now of record are believed to be in allowable form, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

As a final matter, applicant notes that a Second Information Disclosure Statement was filed on November 24, 2003, and applicant further respectfully requests that the Examiner consider this information and return an acknowledged citation form with the next Official Communication.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ In light of this statement and the indication in the Office Action Summary that claims 17 and 18 are not rejected and only objected to, the inclusion of such claims in the first rejection is believed to be an inadvertent error.